

Prayer Meeting

GLORIFYING THE LORD JESUS.

Week Beginning October 10. 2 Thes. 1: 11-12.

The inspired author had just written of a blessed consummation that was to be realized as the crown of our Master's redemptive work, as well as the honor and delight of his redeemed people; a time for which all other times are made, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." It would nevertheless be a period of supreme and final testing and was therefore to be anticipated with heart-searching and was to be the culmination of a trustful, persistent and effective advance in spiritual experience.

A consummation so happy and, indeed, so august, was a worthy object of earnest and constant prayer; "wherefore" says the apostle, "we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power."

What a comprehensive prayer this is and how high the standard which it would have attained in the life of believers! Can any pardoned sinner, the object of divine mercy, be counted worthy of this calling. He can through Christ, and through him alone. Infinite merit can avail that the saved sinner may be counted worthy of this calling; worthy for the sake of the Mediator, and worthy in that the gracious plan of pardon has been accepted. There is no lowering of standards, and no abandonment of required perfect fulfillment. The Omniscient God is to be the judge. The prayer is "that our God will count you worthy."

On the human side the solemn exactions embraced in this remarkable prayer, increase rather than diminish. In the Revised Version we read "And fulfill every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power." What heights of perfection are here anticipated, and expressed! Can any soul ever attain to such excellence? We must say that no mere man has ever reached these supreme heights. It is yet true that every honest redeemed soul is sincerely aspiring to them, and that for their ultimate attainment he can pray sincerely and expectantly. Our active life here is a training and drilling for the ideal life which God has promised, and though our earthly life will be marred by defects and deformities throughout, its goal is perfection, and toward that goal we are pressing, and to it we will most surely attain.

No lower standard can be set for our aim and with none other can we be satisfied as the ideal of our longing expressed in prayer. Paul and his associates here are but giving expression to the conscious yearning of every renewed and enlightened heart when they pray for the perfection of experience and conduct.

The ultimate end and supreme fruition of all Christian life and every spiritual excellence, is the glory of Christ. We accordingly find the spirit of inspiration adding these words: "That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and ye in him." The true conception of the whole plan and process of redemption is that its transcendent design is the glory of the Redeemer. It may be said with perfect assurance that whatever is for his glory is best, and to that end all else must be made subordinate. At this point sound doctrine very often parts company with religious sentiment. To the natural mind the punishment of the wicked for the glory of divine justice, is not acceptable. We shall never be prepared to know the truth until we fully believe that the glory of our Redeemer is the supreme end.

Very happily, however, the glory of our Lord is not only in harmony with, but involves the glory of his saints; for the inspired petition is that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him." That which declares and exalts our God's abounding grace toward sinners, at the same time proclaims the majesty of his blessed name; and whatever magnifies his name brings blessedness and honor to all who are saved through that name. The bride shares the glory of the Bridegroom. All the members of the

spiritual body are honored by virtue of their union with him who is "Head over all things to the Church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Young People's Societies

DOUBTING CASTLE.

Topic for Sunday, October 17: Pilgrim's Progress Series X. Doubting Castle. Psalm 43: 1-5; 73: 13-20; 1 Kings 19: 1-18.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: Job in Doubting Castle. Job. 30: 19-31.

Tuesday: A prophet in perplexity. Habakkuk 1: 1-17.

Wednesday: Elijah's despair. 1 Kings 19: 4, 13, 14.

Thursday: Peter sinking. Matthew 14: 22, 23.

Friday: The key of promise. 2 Peter 1: 1-4.

Saturday: The way out. Isaiah 39: 14-33; 40: 27-30.

By-paths instead of the straight road to the Celestial City lead the Pilgrims into the dungeons of Doubting Castle, the prisoner of the Giant Despair.

Bunyan's Pilgrim thought he saw an easier way than that which was set before him. Taking it, he fell in with Vain-confidence. Soon he fell into the pit set for upwary travelers.

The believer never prospers or progresses when out of the one way set before him. "This is the way, walk ye in it." "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Finding the inutility of the other ways, and conscious of having left the one right way, the next natural step is to fall into despair. The dungeon of Doubting Castle is well said to be very like the Slough of Despond.

The greatest dangers which beset the believer are not those from without, but those which come from within himself. Over-confidence in his own wisdom, and the effort to make an easier way for himself are among the chief of these.

Elijah furnishes us with a remarkable proof of the source of despondency. He looked within and not without. He cried, "I, even I only," and his own self, loomed so large that he could see naught else, and then he was ready to die.

The story of Elijah, in that part of his life when he fled from Jezebel and her wrath to Beersheba and Horeb, fills us with wonder, unless we remember that with all his greatness he was still but a man. From Carmel's summit to the shelter of the juniper tree, was a remove that nothing else will account for.

But the stay of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle and under the power of the Giant Despair was needlessly long. They might have come out at once. Christian had in his bosom a master key that would unlock any door in the giant's castle. Forgetful of its possession, he had allowed himself and his to be all this time in the bonds of Despair.

It was prayer that brought about the discovery of this forgotten key. Communion with God, combined with humble confession of our sins to him, praising him for his grace, and seeking his help in time of need, will reveal to us means of relief unsuspected before.

The master key is Promise. God's Word has given us his agreement to be our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, our strength in weakness, our sufficiency unto all things. That agreement has always been found practical and useful when it has been tried. He has never yet failed those who have relied upon him.

To find that key we must know his Word, tell him our need in prayer, keep in his way as much as we can, trust to him as our Guide into all truth, and be ready to do his holy will.

"Out of the way we went and then we found,
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground;
And let them that come after have a care,
Lest heedlessness makes them, as we, to fare,
Lest they for trespassing his prisoners are
Whose Castle's Doubting, and whose name's Despair."